

## U. S. OWNERSHIP OF ROADS DISCUSSED

Federal Guarantee of Interest  
Also Suggested at New-  
lands Hearing.

### THOM AND SIMS IN TILT

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Large Dividends.

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"You paid \$1,000,000 in dividends last year," he suggested to Mr. Thom.

"But you forget that many of the roads, a large number of them, paid no dividends," Mr. Thom replied.

"Do you think the railroads ought to continue to pay dividends at the expense of proper equipment for handling traffic?" Mr. Sims asked.

"You cannot get new money for the roads unless you pay something once in a while on the money already invested," retorted Mr. Thom.

Mr. Sims then said:

Mr. Sims refused to admit that he favored Government ownership. He kept coming back to direct questions concerning his attitude with the statement that Mr. Thom and the railroads had said that Government ownership would inevitably result if the relief asked were not given.

"And the railroad owners will not sell to the Government at a fair value," said Mr. Sims. "How are we to have Government ownership under such circumstances?"

"You do not have to get the consent of the owners of the railroads in order to get Government ownership," suggested Mr. Thom, hinting at the exercise of the right of eminent domain.

"So long as the business is so profitable the railroad owners will continue in the business and find a way to prevent the Government acquiring the property," said Mr. Sims.

"I am not so sure about that," replied Mr. Thom. "If conditions continue as they are I believe a time will come when the most earnest advocates of Government ownership will be the owners of the roads themselves."

Near the close of the hearing there was a sharp and interesting colloquy between Representative Sims and Mr. Thom. The latter had referred in one of his statements to the desirability of having railroad legislation settled on a broad, patriotic ground.

"How are you going to get men in Congress who will disregard the local sentiment of the districts they represent?" asked Mr. Sims. "For if the member will not regard local sentiment his constituents will send some man who will."

"I trust we have men now in Congress who are big enough to rise above local sentiment and act out of regard for the interests of the whole country," replied Mr. Thom.

Mr. Thom insisted that his Congressional questioner from the South was going further in the direction of extinguishing State rights than Mr. Thom and his railway associates had proposed in their programme for legislation. "We are asking Federal regulation in the interest of the States to preserve the rights of all the States from the burdens which some of the States might wish to impose," said Mr. Thom, "but you are advocating Government ownership, thereby extinguishing all of the rights of the States."

Mr. Sims seemed uncomfortable under these suggestions and insisted on comparing the Federal ownership of railroads with the rural free delivery service, which he averred was popular with Southern farmers.

A letter was read from Benjamin Strong of the New York reserve bank, written from Colorado, in which Mr. Strong suggested that the Government following the war would go upward, and that it would be more difficult for the railroads to command capital. He suggested that the right of eminent domain very profitably look into the effect of the close of the war on higher rates of interest and on railway investments at home and abroad.

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Mr. Thom said the railway policy of the country should be so shaped as to attract and hold the men who are content with a small return on their investment if it is secure. The time had gone by when the investor who was willing to take a risk in the hope of big returns could be induced to take railway securities. One certain way to attain this result was for the Government to take over and guarantee the return.

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## BENJ. F. NORRIS SUE BY BRIDE OF ROMANCE

Wife of a Malt Dealer Named  
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## GUARDSMEN AGREE SYSTEM IS FAILURE

Members of Returning Seventh  
Say Compulsory Training  
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## BUSINESS TO VOTE ON CONSERVATION

U. S. Chamber of Commerce  
Submits Remedial Legislation  
Plan to Referendum.

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 29.—Commercial bodies of the country through a referendum sent by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States will have an opportunity to vote for or against the report of a special committee which recommends that there should be remedial legislation to permit cooperation of the public interest in the conservation of the country's natural resources, on condition that the agreements in fact tend to conserve the resources, to lessen accidents and to promote the public interest.

The plan is to make it possible for the Federal Trade Commission to go beyond its present powers of investigation and to formulate constructive plans under which an industry may operate to the common benefit of consumers, workmen and producers.

The committee making the report is headed by W. L. Saunders of New York, chairman of the board of directors of the Ingersoll-Rand Company, and formerly president of the American Institute of Mining Engineers. The other members are William B. Clark, professor of geology at Johns Hopkins University and geologist for the State of Maryland; John H. Pusey, a newspaper publisher of Boston and formerly president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States; Charles S. Keith, a lumberman and coal operator of Kansas; and President of the Southern Pine Association, and Dr. Charles R. Van Hise, a well known geologist and president of Wisconsin University.

The committee has in mind remedial legislation which would in no sense encroach upon State jurisdiction but which, when these enterprises through their entrance upon interstate trade become subject to Federal statutes, would declare legal the situations that are in question in the event that certain conditions have been met.

It is contended by the committee that in the course of the last twenty-five years the competition which increases waste of natural resources and heightens the cost of production of commodities has grown in breadth and intensity.

The quantities of products that the country's natural resources are called upon to furnish have greatly increased during the years which have elapsed since general legislation dealing with interstate trade was enacted. The production of coal from American mines has increased almost fivefold, while the population has increased less than 70 per cent. During the last quarter of a century the yearly drain upon our sources of petroleum has increased sixfold and more.

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Secretary Daniels Gives Out  
Contracts for Additions  
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These vessels comprise the bulk of the great building program appropriated for by the last session of Congress. Bids for four battle cruisers will be received December 6, and for three scout cruisers on January 3, with the hope of completing the task of getting all the ships under contract within the six months limit set by Congress.

Already the House Naval Committee is at work on the 1918 bill and early in the spring the Department must find building facilities for at least three more battleships, one battle cruiser and a proportionate number of other craft remaining on the three-year construction programme. The bill to be put through this winter for the navy will carry a total of nearly \$400,000,000.

Two Firms Get Big Ships.

Contracts for two battleships each were awarded to-day to the New York Shipbuilding Company and the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. Secretary Daniels announced that the companies had agreed to the Department's specifications calling for turbo-electric propulsion. It was this point which delayed the awards.

The new battleships will be sister ships to the California and Tennessee, now under construction, except that they will be fitted to carry eight 16 inch rifles instead of twelve 14 inch. They will displace about 32,500 tons. The Department now is considering plans for the 1918 ships, three in number, with indications that they will be of 46,000 tons displacement,